

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Kim Purnell, #316854,	)	<b>C/A No. 3:11-2735-RBH-JRM</b>
	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	<b>Report and Recommendation</b>
	)	
Sgt. L. Morris;	)	
South Carolina Department of Corrections,	)	
	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

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***Background of this Case***

Plaintiff is an inmate at the Ridgeland Correctional Institution of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (“SCDC”). He is serving a seven-year sentence for trafficking in cocaine. Plaintiff’s conviction was entered in the Court of General Sessions for Greenville County in 2006.

In the above-captioned case, Plaintiff alleges that Sergeant Morris sprayed him with mace on July 9, 2010. Plaintiff also alleges that Defendant Morris withheld medical treatment from him. Plaintiff filed a grievance (Grievance No. RCI-0700-10) on July 10, 2010, and received SCDC’s final answer on the grievance on April 8, 2011. As a result of the grievance, a disciplinary charge was dismissed. Part V of the Complaint (the Relief portion) is left blank, although Plaintiff has signed and dated the Complaint on the bottom of page 5 of the Complaint.

## ***Discussion***

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review<sup>1</sup> has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Corr.*, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*); *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); *Loe v. Armistead*, 582 F.2d 1291 (4th Cir. 1978); and *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978). Plaintiff is a *pro se* litigant, and thus his pleadings are accorded liberal construction. See *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89 (2007)(*per curiam*); *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n. 7 (1980)(*per curiam*); *Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint or petition, the plaintiff's or petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. *Fine v. City of New York*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). Even so, a plaintiff must plead factual content that allows the Court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is plausibly liable, not merely possibly liable. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 (2009). Even when considered under this less stringent standard, however, the § 1983 Complaint is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the Court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Department of Social Services*, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990).

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<sup>1</sup>Pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Civil Rule 73.02 DSC, the undersigned is authorized to review such complaints for relief and submit findings and recommendations to the District Court.

SCDC is immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment, which divests this court of jurisdiction to entertain a suit brought against the State of South Carolina or its integral parts, such as a state agency or department. *See, e.g., Federal Maritime Comm'n v. South Carolina State Ports Auth.*, 535 U.S. 743 (2002); *Board of Trs. of Univ. of Ala. v. Garrett*, 531 U.S. 356 (2001); *Kimel v. Florida Bd. of Regents*, 528 U.S. 62 (2000); *Alden v. Maine*, 527 U.S. 706 (1999); *Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89 (1984) (although express language of Eleventh Amendment only forbids suits by citizens of other States against a State, Eleventh Amendment bars suits against a State filed by its own citizens); *Belcher v. South Carolina Bd. of Corr.*, 460 F. Supp. 805, 808-809 (D.S.C. 1978); *Simmons v. South Carolina State Highway Dep't*, 195 F. Supp. 516, 517 (E.D.S.C. 1961).

Although use of mace or a chemical munition, depending on circumstances, may be actionable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, *Williams v. Benjamin*, 77 F.3d 756 (4th Cir. 1996), Plaintiff has failed to seek any relief. Were this Court to find that Plaintiff's rights have been violated, but order no remedy, it would, in effect, be rendering an advisory opinion, which is barred by Article III of the Constitution. *See FCC v. Pacifica Found.*, 438 U.S. 726, 735 (1978) ("[F]ederal courts have never been empowered to issue advisory opinions."); *Preiser v. Newkirk*, 422 U.S. 395, 401 (1975); *Herb v. Pitcairn*, 324 U.S. 117, 126 (1945) ("We are not permitted to render an advisory opinion[.]");<sup>2</sup> *Incumaa v. Ozmint*, 507 F.3d 281, 289 (4th Cir. 2007) ("Federal courts are not comprised of philosopher-kings or legislative aides, and the Constitution forbids us from pontificating about abstractions in the law or merely giving advice about the potential legal

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<sup>2</sup>Other portions of the decision in *Herb v. Pitcairn* have been superannuated by later case law. *See Michigan v. Long*, 463 U.S. 1032 (1983).

deficiencies of a law or policy when no ongoing controversy exists with respect to that law or policy.”); *United States v. Burlington N. R.R. Co.*, 200 F.3d 679, 699 (10th Cir. 1999) (refusing to respond to party’s “request for guidance in future cases” because the request was “tantamount to a request for an advisory opinion”).

### ***Recommendation***

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without service of process. Plaintiff’s attention is directed to the Notice on the next page.



October 28, 2011  
Columbia, South Carolina

Joseph R. McCrorey  
United States Magistrate Judge

**Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation**

Plaintiff is advised that he may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Judge. **Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections.** “[I]n the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must ‘only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.’” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005) (*quoting* Fed. R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee’s note).

Specific written objections must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), (d). Filing by mail pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

**Larry W. Propes, Clerk of Court  
United States District Court  
901 Richland Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201**

**Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation.** 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984).